

Focus Group Results

The Tempe Community for Kids project conducted five focus groups, facilitated by an independent consultant, to gather ideas and concerns from parents about the community support needed to raise children, especially young children. The data will be used by the Tempe Community for Kids task force as part of their planning process. The focus groups, completed during September through November 2002, included members of 65 households from different geographic areas of Tempe. Demographic descriptors of the participants are included in Appendix A. Groups comprised of primarily Spanish-speaking participants were conducted through an interpreter. The focus groups were as follows:

Frank School Family Literacy Program – Spanish-speaking parents
Escalante Community Center – Spanish-speaking parents from a school-based nutrition program
Escalante Community Center – open enrollment evening group, English-speaking parents
Association for Supportive Child Care – day care providers (participating also as parents)
Cielo Elementary School Parents as First Teachers class

During the two-hour sessions, participants responded to a series of open-ended questions designed to elicit their perceptions about their experiences as parents, the community support systems they currently use, and ideas to make the community even more supportive of families with children. The questions are included in Appendix B.

The focus group sessions were intended to produce qualitative, anecdotal data of participant perceptions of community support for raising their children. Participant comments were written on a flip chart by the facilitator and tape recorded with the permission of the participants to ensure accuracy in reporting the data. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality and asked to speak openly. The data analysis identifies trends and patterns based on a content analysis of their comments. Results are not intended to draw quantitative, statistical conclusions regarding these issues.

Summary of Results

The purpose of the focus groups is to provide an assessment of issues affecting families with children, not recommendations or solutions. Although participants answered thirteen different questions during the group sessions, all were aimed at providing insight into one key issue for the planning task force: what would be included in a community that was VERY supportive of families with young children. The following eight statements sum up the main points. A discussion of each statement and the participant comments supporting each statement, when relevant, are included in section III of this report.

1. Participants expressed a need for more childcare choices, especially options for occasional childcare use and after-hours care.
2. Language is a significant barrier that diminishes a non-English speaking parent's confidence and sense of belonging in the community.
3. Participants receive nutrition and health information for their children primarily from the schools or government-sponsored programs such as WIC, their doctor, if they have health insurance, or from the media.

4. Government agencies such as police and fire departments and the media are the main sources of safety information for parents.
5. Participants value their children's' education and want to ensure that their children are recognized and treated as individuals by the school system.
6. Parks and libraries provide a significant source of low-cost social, recreational and educational activities for families. Participants expressed a need for more free recreation options for teens.
7. Participants need help keeping their children safe from outside influences such as peer pressure, drugs and alcohol, and drug dealers in their neighborhood.
8. Participants expressed a desire for opportunities to connect with other parents and discuss issues related to caring for their children.